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Revenge of the Liberal Arts Major

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If you're in college, or happen to be about to graduate, and you've been mocked for getting a liberal arts degree, here's a piece of welcome news: You're actually in more demand than those who are getting finance and accounting degrees. That's one of the findings of a new survey of 225 employers issued today by Millennial Branding (<http://millennialbranding.com/>) and Experience Inc (<http://www.experience.com/entry-level-jobs/>).

The main takeaway of the survey, at least according to the press release that went out with it, was that there's a disconnect taking place with regard to internships. While 91 percent of employers think students should have one or two of the temporary, professionally focused positions before they graduate, 50 percent haven't actually hired any interns in the last six months. Somehow, we don't think this is going to change either the crush of students looking for internships or the stated desire of employers to hire those who have internships under their belts.

More interesting, at least for those of us who got some parental grief over our college choice, was the apparent love being shown for liberal arts majors. Thirty percent of surveyed employers said they were recruiting liberal arts types, second only to the 34 percent who said they were going after engineering and computer information systems majors. Trailing were finance and accounting majors, as only 18 percent of employers said they were recruiting targets.

"The No. 1 skill that employers are looking for are communication skills and liberal arts students who take classes in writing and speaking," said Dan Schawbel (<http://danschawbel.com/>), founder of Millennial Branding and an expert on Generation Y. "They need to become good communicators in order to graduate with a liberal arts degree. Companies are looking for soft skills over hard skills now because hard skills can be learned, while soft skills need to be developed."

One other finding from the survey to emphasize: 29 percent of employers said they were looking for graduates with entrepreneurial experience. That's far behind the 69 percent who think relevant courses are an important factor to someone's candidacy, or the 65 percent who say a referral from a boss or professor is significant, or the 50 percent who like to see a leadership position in a campus organization.

But at least it's a recognition that an entrepreneurial spirit or go-getter attitude can be a clear plus.

"Employers are looking for entrepreneurship experience now because they have more pressure to innovate from within," Schawbel said in an email exchange with Portfolio.com, predicting this number would rise. "Entrepreneurship, in my opinion, is defined as 'personal accountability.' You don't need to own a company to be an entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial attitude is cherished because they are goal-oriented, have sales skills, and have good business sense."

For more on the survey, click here for the press release (<http://millennialbranding.com/2012/05/millennial-branding-student-employment-gap-study/>) or click here for an infographic (http://millennialbranding.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/student_employment_gap_infographic.jpg) detailing all the employers' attitudes.

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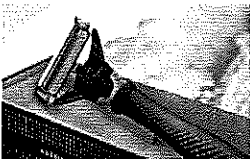
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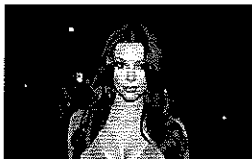


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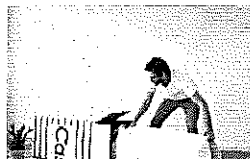


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